

Austria's Aged Emperor to Marry a Child,

TO SECURE
AN
HEIR TO
THE
THRONE.

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The Sister of the Little Boy King of Spain.



THE
LITTLE
INFANTAS
e MERCEDES
AND
MARIA
TERESA

THE PRINCESS MERCEDES OF SPAIN.

CHRISTINA-THE QUEEN MOTHER OF
SPAIN AND HER THREE
CHILDREN.

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R EPORT is circulated among European courts that the Emperor Franz Josef of Austria will marry the Princess Maria de las Mercedes of Spain, who was Queen during the six months between her father's death and the birth of her brother, Alfonso XIII. The Emperor is nearly seventy, the Princess just eighteen.

He is the most unhappy monarch in the world. His wife, son and brother have died by violence.

She represents the most rotten and decrepit nation in the world.

The marriage is needed for the salvation of Austria and the peace of Europe. If the Emperor have no other heir than his disgraced nephew his empire will go to pieces. In that event the universal European conflagration will break out.

By Edgar Saltus.

reporters as about to marry Mercedes of Spain. The Emperor is nearly seventy, the bride is just eighteen. But the match is not ill-sorted. He is the monarch of a tottering nation, she is the princess of a crumbling realm. Personally, he is an amiable gentleman and she an unaffected girl.

ready death had that matter in charge.

Alfonso, the Rey Nino, was a posthumous surprise. But anteriorly Mercedes had been born. The latter, at the death of her father, reigned for six months. Then, Alfonso appearing, she took a back seat. As she was only five years old she did not mind very much. The throne, however, has been regarded as unfortunate. Alfonso is the thirteenth of his name. The number is accounted unlucky, and

But behind him are chronicles of disaster.
Behind her are annals of defeat.

Their union, therefore, will be not merely that of a veteran preparing for death and of a maiden preparing for life; it will be the wedding of two of destiny's victims, the nuptials of puppets of fate.

Maria de las Mercedes, Princess of the Asturias, is the daughter of the last king of Spain. She was so named by him in memory not of his first love—he had a hundred—but in memory of his first real love and first wife. The latter, Mercedes de Montpensier, was one of the prettiest little girls that Seville ever saw, and Seville has seen many.

The King—he was just King then—adored her. The ceremony which ensued was mediaeval in beauty. Madrid went mad with delight. In six months the girl was dead. There are people who pretend to know why. There are no state secrets any more. But this is gossip. The point is that that which killed her morally killed him. The marriage which followed with the lady who at present is Queen Regent was for reasons entirely dynastic. Canovas recalled the debt to her on one occasion, otherwise just-

not a column, but a catalogue. It is this which Mercedes represents. Behind the girl is not merely the picture of a nation's fall, there is with it the pageantry of splendid shame and the spectacle of royal sinners.

Franz Josef represents less sin than sorrow. The Hapsburgs, from whom he descends, ruled the Roman roost; they ruled the German Empire, too. In Europe for seven centuries they were mighty among the mightiest. But their glory has passed, their star has set, the house and the name of it are ill-omened.

Francis Joseph's first appearance was as a review of his army. By way of encouragement, an anarchist tried to kill him. His last official appearance was at the funeral of his wife, with whom another anarchist had succeeded better. During the intervening years he saw Lombardy and Venice slip from him. He saw his primacy in the German confederation evaporate. He saw losses to the monarchy such as the State had not suffered since the days of Maria Theresa, and disasters comparable only to those which Napoleon produced. He saw the tumults and jealousies of his unrelated races, the revolts of Magyars and of Croats.

These things being insufficient, fate supplied more. There was his brother, Maximilian, butchered by Juarez on the plains of Queretaro. There was his son, Rudolph, knocked on the head in a drunken brawl, and there was his wife, whom an obscure reptile recently murdered.

One has to go back to the heroic age, to the old tragedies of the Greek dramatists, to find a King pursued by Nemesis as relentlessly as he. No sovereign of modern times has supped on horrors so protractedly. One after another, brother, son and wife were taken from him—the first by a bullet, the second by a bottle, the third by a beast. That the bomb which explodes in the paths of Emperors has been absent from his own is due, perhaps, to one of fate's refinements—that living he might suffer more.

To-day without an heir and with the future of the empire menaced, weary and alone the old man stands. He has daughters, indeed, and he has also nephews, but for reasons too complex for recital here they are not available. One nephew, Otto, regarded for a time as heir-presumptive, showed himself as unfitted to reign as a coster would be. The grandson of Bismarck, the

worst of the Bourbons, which is saying a great deal, his one title to distinction is a public insult which he offered to his wife and for which the Emperor honored him with personal and equally public chastisement. Considered as an heir, he is worse than none, and yet an heir there must be.

The name Hapsburg, derived from Halbsburg, means a vulture's nest. When Rudolph was killed there ensued a stupor into which presently altered the discernment that, barring a miracle, the name was doomed, that vultures of another brood, birds of prey that nested not within the realm, but without, were hovering at the frontier, waiting but for the helpless Emperor to die to batten on the empire's vitals.

The possibility may seem unimportant. It is the reverse. To Austria the preservation of the dynasty may mean but the preservation of the empire, yet to the world the preservation of the empire means the preservation of the Triple Alliance, and to Europe that, for some time past, has spelled Peace.

To insure these things a miracle was required. In its stead an infamy occurred. The wife of Franz Josef was killed.

The late Empress had everything which an artificial world can give except artificiality, everything which power can bestow except might. If she ever harmed a human being, that human being was herself. The assassination of a woman such as she was, politically speaking, wanton, and, socially, without excuse. But it set Franz Josef free.

A month has little more than come and gone since then. Last week it was reported that the widowed monarch was preparing to marry again. As already recited, the bride-to-be is Mercedes of Spain. Should the marriage take place and a child result, there will be the miracle, indeed. And yet it might not be so miraculous after all. Thinkers of ken have averred that at fifty a husband usually becomes a father; at sixty rarely; at seventy, always.



Es giebt nur ein Welberstadt:
Und das ist Berlin.
So runs the legend. Like others it is
false. The real city of women is Vienna.
It would be indecorous to describe it as a
beautiful haven, but there is no danger

Beautiful harem, but there is no impropriety in stating that the pearls of paradise are not as pretty nor half as well dressed as are the sultanas of the Imperial Court. They have the Orient in their eyes and lips that say Drink me.

Among the bejermets of these ladies Franz Josef may have faltered, but he never fell. His life has differed from that of his son, differed, too, from that of his nephew. He may not be without reproach, but, then, who is? The point is that though a royal he has not been a rake. Even otherwise the distances in which disappointed old kings and fair young princesses have been suffered to remain childless, are

CRISTINA - THE QU
SPAIN

sufficiently frequent to dispense with citation.

To the Kaiser, then, Hoch! To the Kaiserin, Prost! And to their offspring, Gegrüßte Mahlzeit immer! Yet even in the least the men salute in salutations. There are

The mingling of the Hapsburgs with the Bourbon blight has been effected before. The last time it occurred the result was the thirteenth Alfonso. What a ruin of their ill omens can accomplish now we may surmise, yet perhaps never know. Behind the one vistas of tragedies lurk. Behind the other is a panorama of content. The background of both is aglow with splendor and with sin. But above each the three Fates sit spinning.

EDGAR SALTUS.

Paper to Be Made Out of Aluminum.

Experimenters with aluminum as a substitute for paper are now under way in France. It is well known that the paper used to-day in the manufacture of books is not durable.

It is now possible to roll aluminum into sheets four-thousandths of an inch in thickness, in which form it weighs less than paper. By the adoption of suitable machinery these sheets can be made even thinner still, and can be used for book and writing paper. The metal will not oxidize, is practically fire and water proof and is indestructible by the laws of nature.